

Curation of Returned Samples

**Discovery Program 2006
and
Missions of Opportunity**

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5.2.2 Protocols and Policies for Handling Returned Samples

Curation Responsibility: All samples of extraterrestrial planetary materials returned by Discovery missions are NASA property (see NPR 7100.10D, Curation of Extraterrestrial Materials, in the DPL) and must be delivered to and processed by the NASA Astromaterials Curatorial Facility located at NASA's Johnson Space Center (JSC); contact Dr. Carlton Allen, Astromaterials Curator telephone (281) 483-5126 email carlton.c.allen@nasa.gov

Curation Responsibility: The Astromaterials Curator is responsible for the physical security, documentation, inventory accountability, environmental preservation, and distribution of the samples in support of scientific research programs organized around each mission, including sample processing in support of the mission science team.

Curation Costs: Funding for use of the JSC Curatorial Facility, including all required laboratory construction or modification, must be included in the budget for the proposed mission. The actual costs for all aspects of curation from planning through distribution and storage will be borne by the mission from inception to two years following sample return.

Early Science / Preliminary Examination:

Mission proposals are expected to budget for the preliminary examination of the samples and describe contamination control, curation laboratory requirements, and preliminary examination of the samples. Within six months of sample return, the team should produce a catalog containing sufficient information to allow the community at large to propose research with the samples.

Samples to be used by the science team shall be allocated under procedures similar to those currently in use for other astromaterials collections, but expedited to allow early science return from the mission team.

Curatorial Representative: On request, the Astromaterials Curator will provide a curatorial representative to assist the PI in planning for sample curation and developing an appropriate budget based on mission and sample characteristics. PIs are encouraged to include the curatorial representative as an Ex Officio member of the mission science team.

Samples for Foreign Participants: As a proportionate return for investment by foreign participants in a mission that returns extraterrestrial materials, a fraction of the total returned sample may be forwarded to the national curatorial facility of the contributing country within six months after return to the NASA Astromaterials Curatorial Facility. It is expected that the amount of sample so transferred will be approximately proportional to the non-U.S. contribution, but in no case will be more than one-third of the total sample. Any material allocated to foreign members of the Science Team during the Preliminary Examination period shall be included in this one-third limitation.

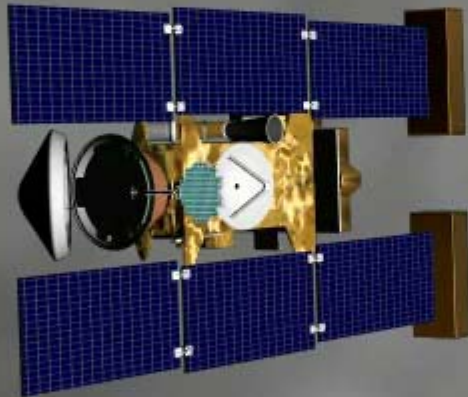
Samples for Foreign Participants: The terms and conditions of selection of a sample fraction for transmission to the contributing country must be specified in the mission proposal. However, in the event that the mission is selected, the final arrangements for the transfer of a fraction of the sample to the contributing country must be established through an exchange of letters or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NASA (with approval of the Astromaterials Curator) and the contributing foreign participant.

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